



Colony Manor housing serviced the students of RIT for over 50 years but had fallen into disrepair by 2018. RIT expects students to have the opportunity to live in the highest quality housing environment possible. As a result, the design team worked with the developer and contractor to demolish Colony Manor and design a state-of-the-art purpose-built student housing facility to replace the old structures. The new structure is seven stories tall and provides housing for 1,250 students.



The primary goal was to maximize the number of units built near RIT. The Town of Henrietta has experienced pressure to satisfy the increased housing demand along the East River Road Corridor and the Southwest Quadrant. As a result, new developments have been proposed and constructed over a mile from campus leading to increased traffic. Single-family homes turned rentals often undermine the fabric of the surrounding communities. The development of this student housing meets the Town's goals of directing students to a safe, well-manicured, and quality-built housing environment. The design team worked closely with the Town to maximize the project density, limit environmental impact, and provide a strong asset for the community.

The inside of the building balances cultivating student connection through various amenities while protecting students from cross-contamination, in response to the pandemic.



Colony Manor &
APEX Under Construction

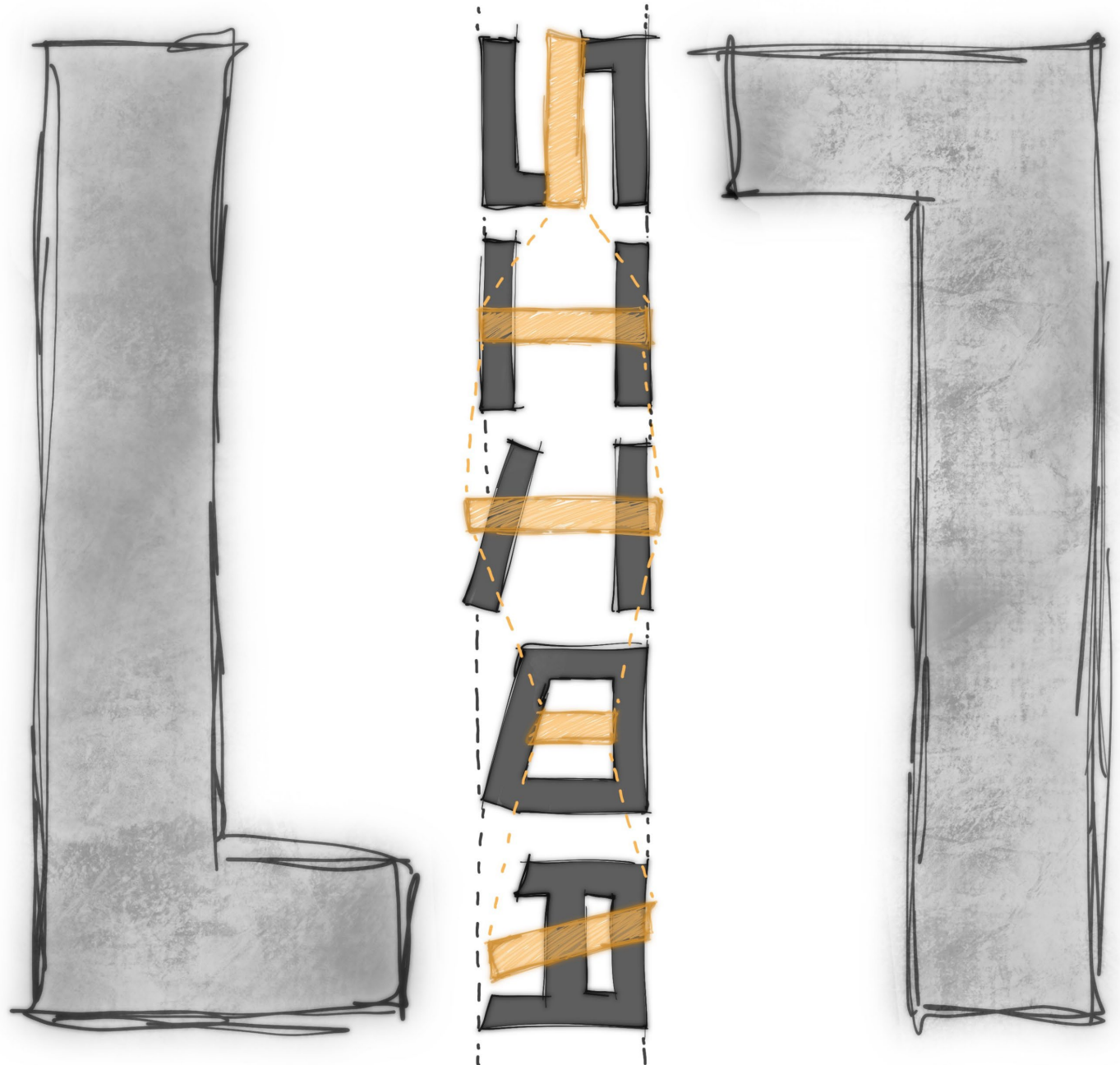


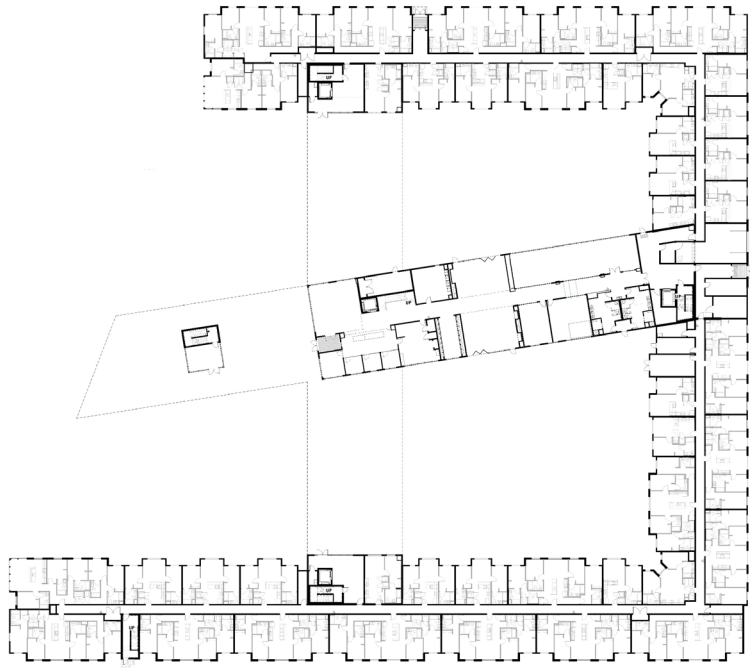
Design for Integration

The project sponsors, the University and the Town of Henrietta, both had one primary objective for this student housing project: *maximize the density to provide high-quality student housing immediately adjacent to RIT.*

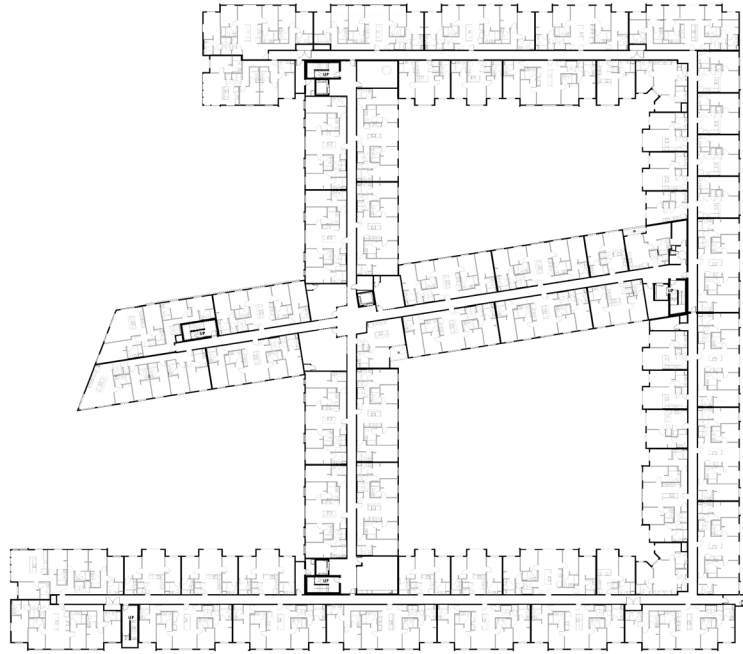
Over the past three decades, most housing projects built near RIT were relatively low-density, traditional, three-story buildings. A rising student demand led to a sprawl of apartment complexes and subsequent environmental issues including increased traffic, loss of green space, and lack of walkability. The design team deployed a unique and progressive approach to maximize density utilizing a seven-story structure, condensed building footprint, and reduced parking/pavement.

With 1,250 beds on 14 acres, this student housing project helps to satisfy the local housing demand while providing walkable access to the University.

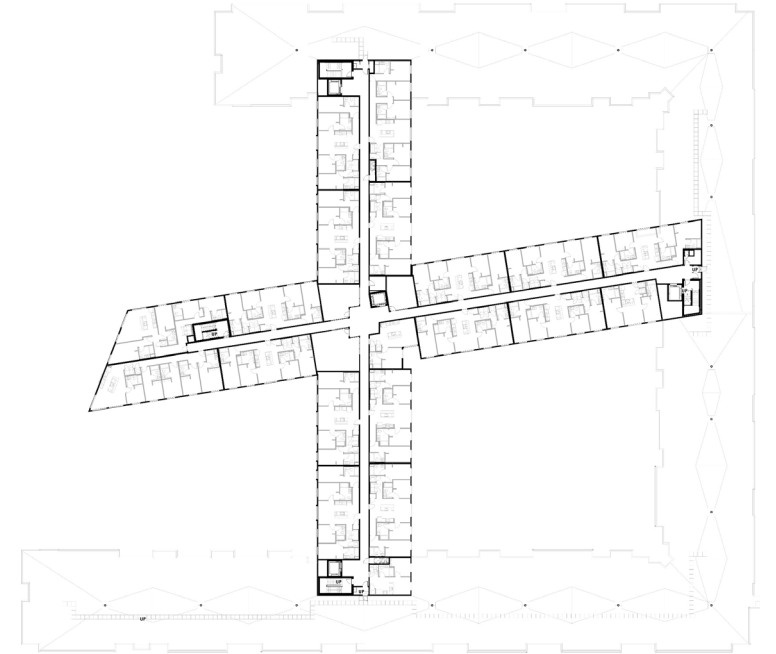




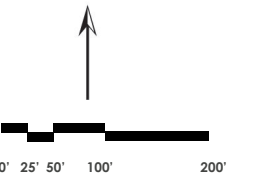
1st Floor



3rd Floor



6th Floor



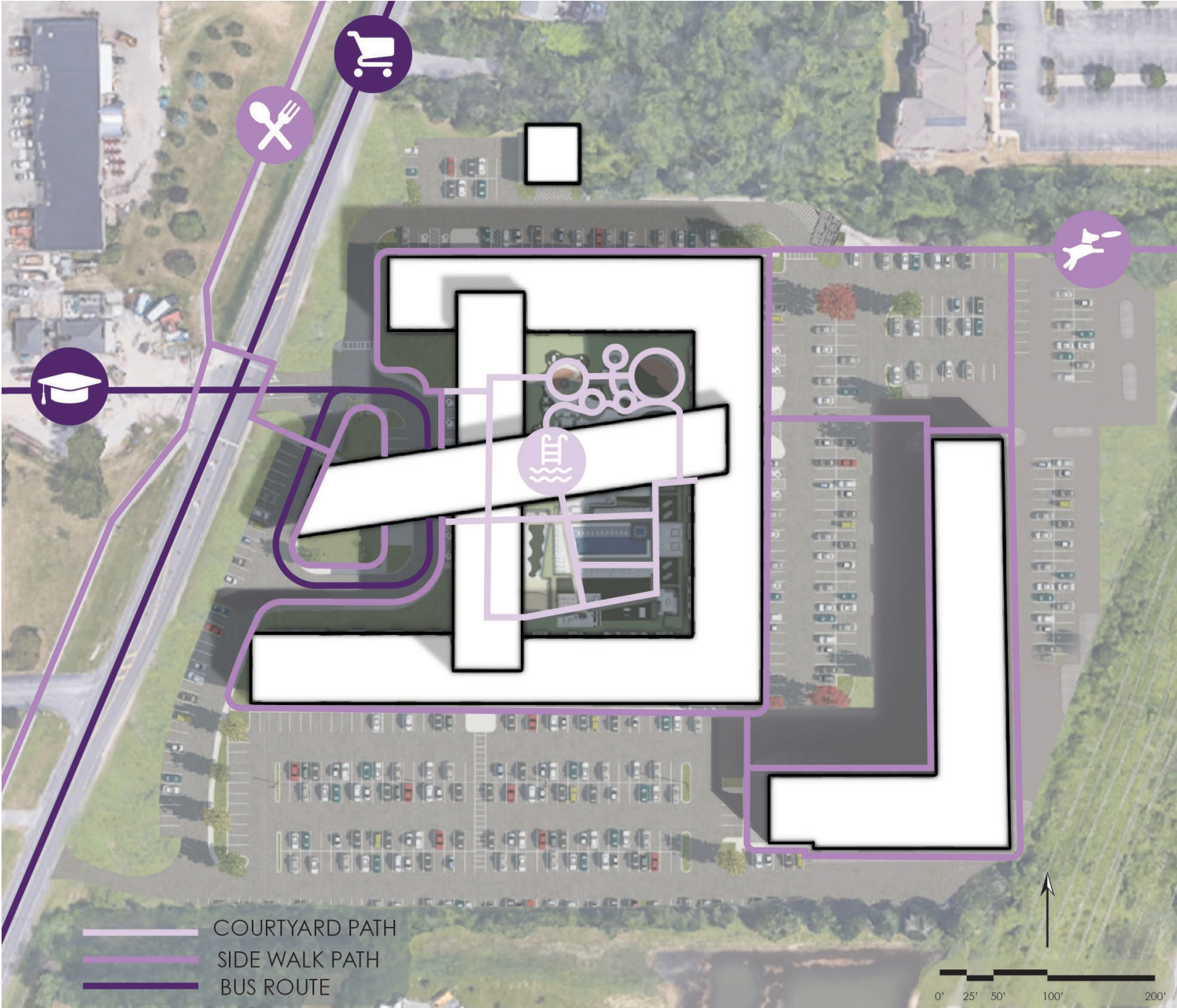
Floor Plans

With over 1,200 occupants, the project stands seven stories tall with highly desirable amenities, both indoor and outdoor.



Design for Equitable Communities

This student housing project provides direct access to a wide variety of on- and off-site amenities without ever having to use a personal vehicle. Multi-modal transportation options, including a connection to the public pedestrian trail system, dedicated shuttles, and bicycle accommodations, allow residents to access the RIT Campus, Park Point Mixed Use development, and several retail establishments in South Henrietta. On-site, this project includes active and passive recreational courtyards to encourage social engagement and physical fitness. The north courtyard includes meditation areas, landscaped seating and gardens. In the south courtyard, residents have access to swimming and various outdoor sports. The layout encourages occupants to walk, bike, or take the bus before needing a personal vehicle.





Multimodal Transportation



Form

The overall form creates two large courtyards that focus on connectivity and wellness. They are accessible from the ground level and invite students who are just arriving at the property or who are feeling cooped up inside.



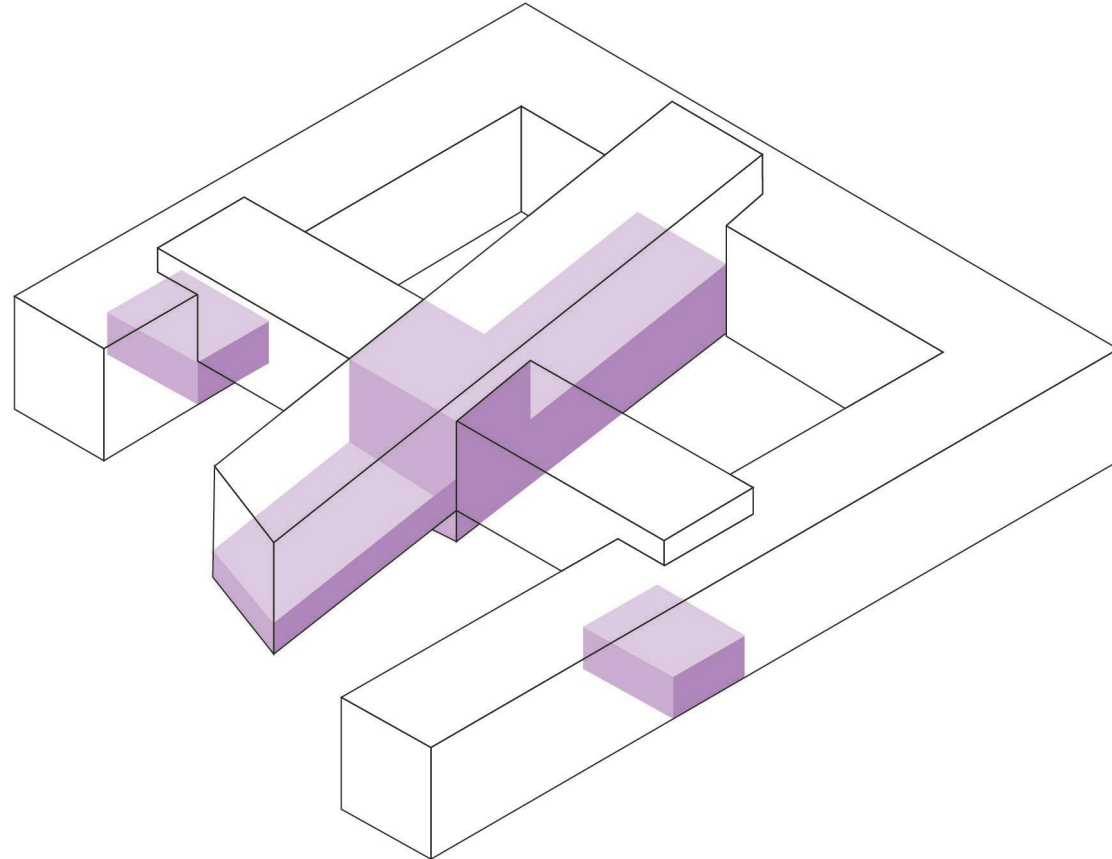
Design for Wellness

Heightened by the COVID pandemic, student wellness was a primary consideration in the design of this project. Promoting socialization while allowing for social distancing was of utmost concern.

For maximum optional separation, each bedroom contains a secured lock and private bathroom to limit cross-contamination and allows students to safely and comfortably quarantine when necessary.

With a focus on the importance of human interaction for students, this project provides several communal areas such as the E-Gaming area, gyms, study rooms, courtyards, and lounges. The E-Gaming arena encourages students involved in E-Sports to get out of their rooms and interact with members of the building community. It's fully equipped with the latest technology, giving students every reason to join their friends.

For those residents that prefer physical activity, this project provides a full-service gym, fitness rooms, swimming, exercise classes, and outdoor meditation areas in the north courtyard. Study rooms on each level provide group study tables and independent study rooms to promote collaboration and focus when needed. The abundance of amenities encourages students to fulfill their needs and wants in the company of their community.





North & South Courtyards



By introducing high density to the site, integration of communal space encourages engagement. The North Courtyard fosters pastimes like barbequing and fire pits while the South Courtyard focuses on sunbathing and relaxing.



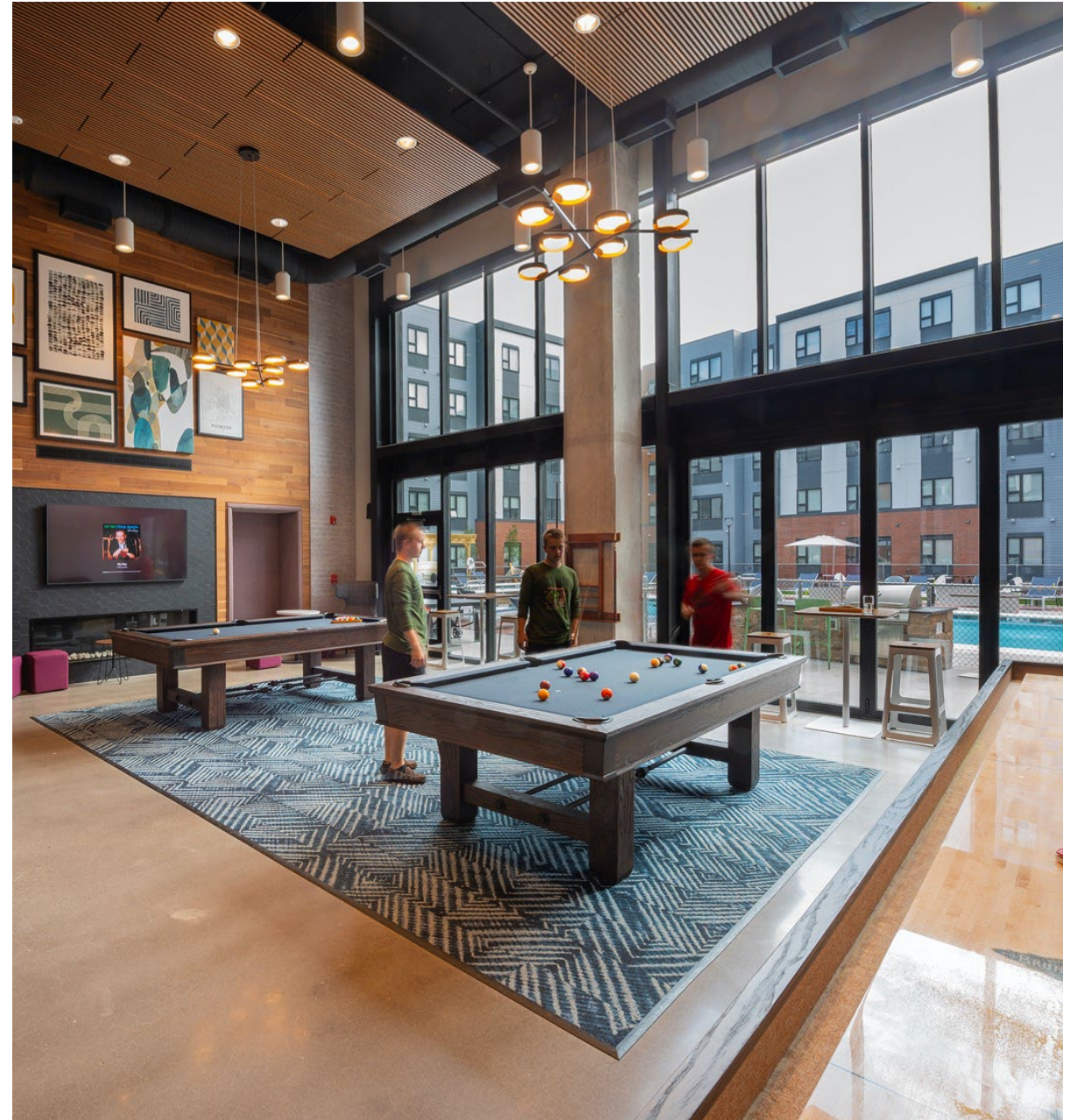
North & South Courtyards

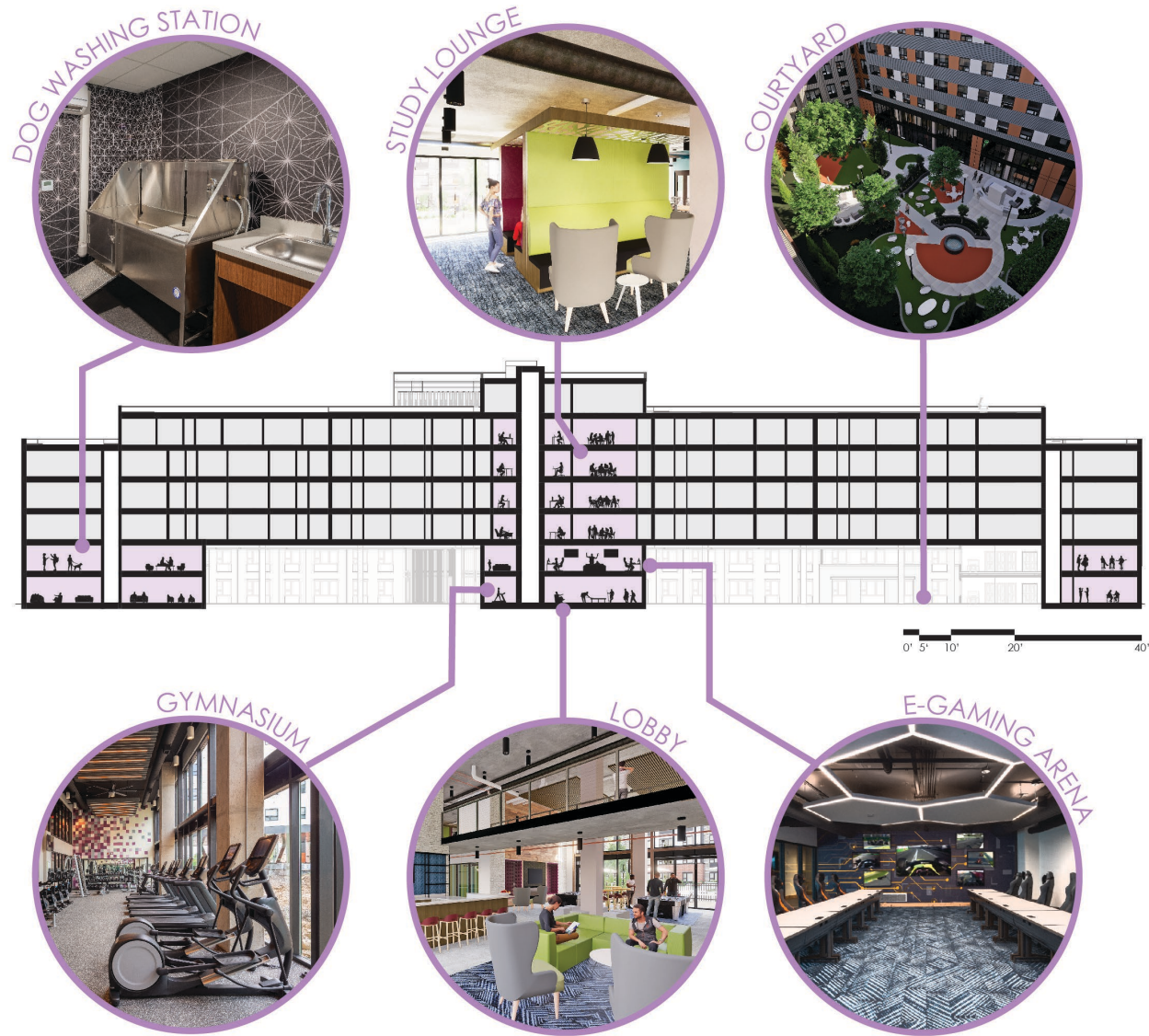
Community Impact Award

A key conceptual focus throughout the design process at APEX was on its potential to enhance the multitude of communities that it touches and to develop a community of its own for its residents. As a market-rate student housing space APEX can engage with several communities. The building was designed with this in mind, as a space that could accommodate these communities, and enhance the life of its own community. Many new multi-family housing facilities are designed for efficiency, with development goals for unit count, unit mix, and desired density all set under a proforma of some kind, and result in projects that have minimal to no focus on the residents themselves. One of the predominant goals in the design and manifestation of APEX was to achieve the logistic goals set by ownership without losing focus on the residents.

The concept was to develop spaces that would encourage and augment the residents and help to develop a community structure, which it does. Spaces like the competitive gaming arena, fitness center, communal study areas, lounge, maker spaces, courtyards, and virtual reality studios all work to encourage people living at APEX to come together and establish the dialogue that is the basis of the community. By working with current and past students, interviewing current students and faculty, and researching growing trends in community growth areas at the University, the design team was able to create spaces designed specifically to cater to the residents of APEX unburdened by any pre-conceptions. These spaces were informed by the future users of the space at the time of their design and have become successful catalysts of community in their implementation.

Today APEX stands as a successful iteration of the process of community informed design. It is not uncommon for non-residents to take one of the many interconnected modes of public transportation, walk, bike, skateboard, or take a scooter over to APEX to engage in community activity with residents, or simply enjoy the facilities themselves. The spaces created throughout the design process, in collaboration with future residents and students, are continually in use and have created a unique and thriving micro-community of residents and non-residents all centered at APEX.





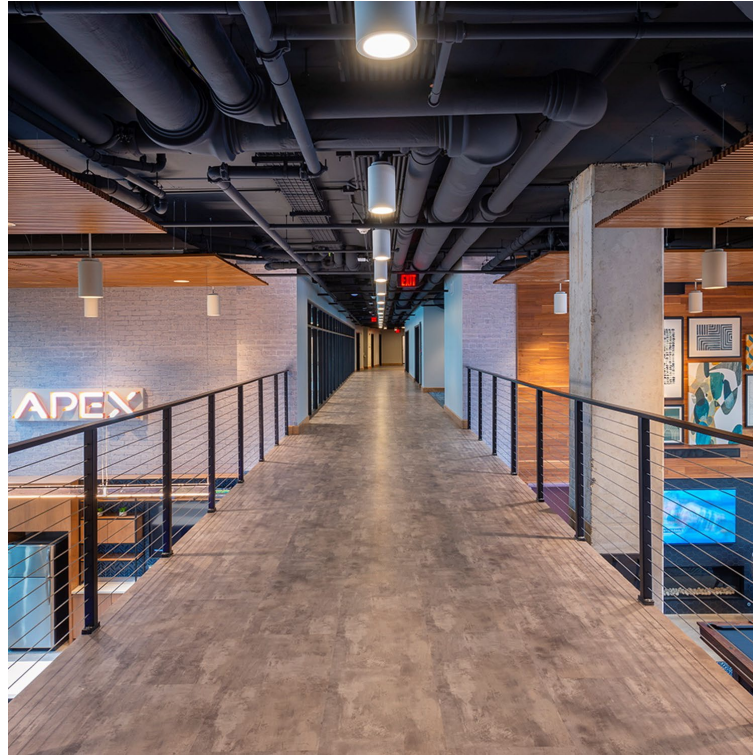
Community Building Amenities

Amenities were selected based on student interviews. These spaces aren't just for an individual tenant to use, but for friends to gather and communities to build.



Community Building Amenities

RIT provides the highest quality housing environment possible by going beyond what students need and investing in what students want.



Central Circulation

The second story circulation opens at the lounge space to ensure connectivity throughout. Greeted by the sounds of the lower lounge, students passing by are invited to join.



Health & Wellness Units

Units are designed to be as open and light as possible as a response to the isolation of the pandemic. The unit also balances privacy and connectivity. Each bedroom has its own on-suite bathroom, but the kitchen and living room are communal with an open floor plan.



APEX Student Housing

The students of RIT spoke, and the design team listened. APEX offers a space for everyone and every community.